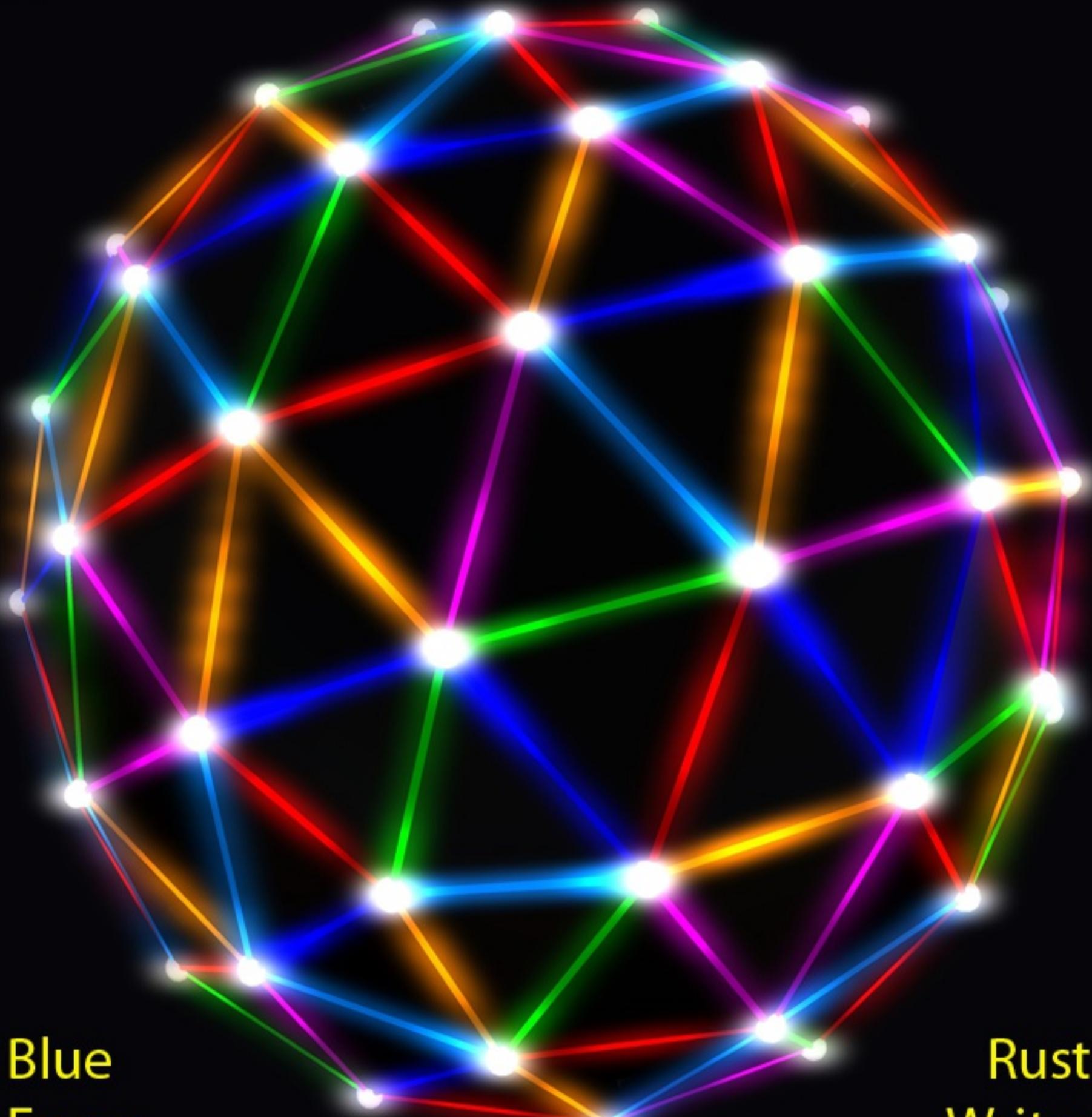


The Virtual Arts and Life Magazine

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Blue
Ervare
Rakshowes

Rust
Writer
Mesmeriser

Kodaly

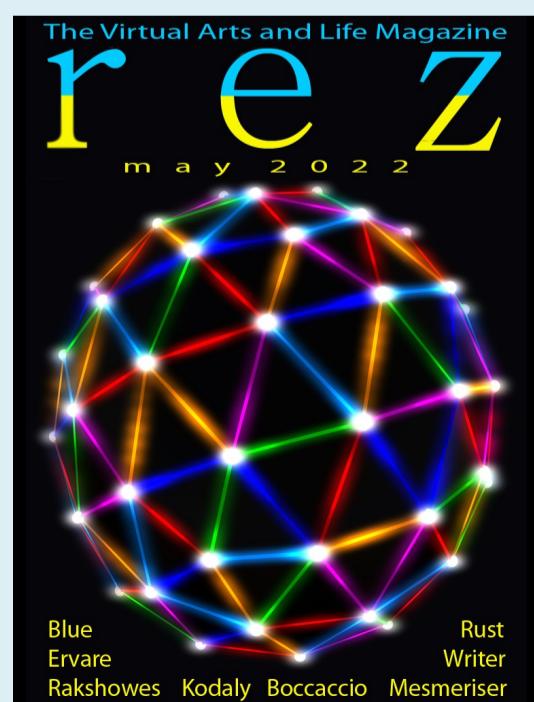
Boccaccio

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read *rez* Magazine online at <http://rezmagazine.com>

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- **First Meaningful Paint** Art Blue strives for something beyond frozen and liquid meaning, something beyond physicality.
- **Pre-knot** RoseDrop Rust's capture of that titilating moment when lives intersect is nothing less than heart pounding.
- **Ignorence** Dearstluv Writer contributes an insightful poem that challenges our ideas of the consequences of our impulses.
- **A Puppet's Tail: Drink Me!** We are entranced by Annie Mesmeriser's road trip through her bizarre and hilarious life.
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- **Portal** Zati Kodaly calls forth Petrarch and Orpheus in an unforgettable poem deep with imagery and her unique style.

About the Cover: This month's cover features the exquisite work of one of our most esteemed artists, Gem Preiz. The piece is called "Homo Uniformis" and it is featured in this month's wonderful article by Art Blue "First Meaningful Paint."



"To be or not to be. Thirteen days ago this question could have been asked about Ukraine, but now, absolutely not. It is obvious, we will be. It is obvious, we will be free."

Volodymyr Zelensky





Rakshowes *Maiden Fair*

A lush and verdant valley surrounds an ancient hill,
With views all round no higher ground, it commands the valley still.
And on this hill, there are the sounds of birds and working bees,
The warming sun, the fresh clean air singing through aging trees.

4000 years passed slowly by to bring us to this day,
But at that time it was a place where people came to stay.
For then a Maiden Castle stood proud upon this hill,
The village people safe and sound were living with a will.

The Maiden Castle village people farmed the fertile valley,
Plowing, sowing, tending and growing crops of Oats and Barley.

But far beyond the waving fields there
sloped a wooded fringe,
A wood so dense small shafts of light left
the merest greenest tinge.

Deep in this wood there slumbers a
special tree it seems,
Low weeping boughs in eerie darkness
dream eternal dreams.
It is said that if you ever touch its gentle
frond like leaves,
You wake the tree and with a fright it
loses all its leaves!
And naked now as if in winter, its
branches are laid bare,
The strangest tree you will ever see, its
name is Maiden Hair

Now with the title Maiden Fair you'll find
it rather odd,
To speak of ancient people who till the
fertile sod,
To understand the magic tree, the one
called Maiden Hair,

To understand the reasons
branches are laid bare,
To understand a touch with
cherish and to care,
A recipe for loving times wi
fair
I know that if you'd touched
with pride it would soon flo
For I am touched in heart a
felt your loving power.
Please lock me in your maid
love me with a will,
And by return I'll tend your
life with love I'll fill.

To walk those verdant valley
an ancient mound,
To feel the warming sunshin
love unabound,
Our world is full of beauty,
them compare,
With beauty, warmth, and r
you; love my maiden fair...

why its
Love, to
th my maiden
d this tree,
ower,
nd soul, I've
den castle.
needs, your
ys, to climb
ne, to feel
but none of
arest love of



FIRST



MEANINGFUL PAINT

art blue



Is it in the Surreal Art Gallery, overwhelmed by the many impressions that came in. Not all of them good. “You expected this,” the owl says. “But when it happens, then it is different,” I say. The owl does not agree. It’s a matter of logic. When you expect that it will rain, then you shall not wonder when it later does. The owl cracks a nut. It’s raining. The owl says, “Like tears in rain.” That is a picture that speaks louder than words. I say, “Time to die.” The reply comes after I hear another knock, “You are not Blade Runner.” Yeah, definitely I am not Rutger Hauer. I am Roy Batty. The owl reads my implant and I hear another knock. “That will be my display name,” I comment the sound. “That’s not a first meaningful paint,” the owl backfires. I sigh. Surely this idea is not even a second meaningful paint. “Not even a paint,” the owl completes my downfall, spreads its wings and flies towards me, landing on my shoulders. Its wings are not really fitting for an advanced life form, but I struggle with the gender question. Once it was clear. Male or Female. He flies, she flies, it flies. To be or not to be, that was the question. Now you don’t even know what the question is. To question one’s gender is even a question where when saying it you might get blamed. “May I ask how to acknowledge you?” stands in the catalogue of Amerika Art. To be or not

to be can’t be solved, so how in Art shall my view in an art catalogue be balanced and make everyone happy?

“Let me read what you have written so far?” the owl interrupts my daydreaming. I wonder, the owl can read my brain but does not know what I have written? I show the pages. “Ah,” I say as the insight hits me. My brain is overloaded on the feedback that hit me, so the lines I had written on paper some weeks ago are gone from my brain.

The owl says, “This text is a typical Art Blue.” Can it come worse? “Come on Art,” the owl goes on, “An artist wants to create a meaningful paint. This is my belief. A painter strives for a paint to reach beyond the physical existence of the painter. It shall be a landmark.” I shout, “What? That is what I wrote. You stole it!” The owl, quite embarrassed, says, “I cut the long sentence to pieces. That gives a new meaning.” I shake my head, “No way, the Google AI finds out and your line will be a copycat. It will backfire on the meaning.” I know the owl is not stupid, the upload of the cut will be done from a different IP address. “What you wrote about the Frozen Paint, I like,” the owl goes on. “Really, I say? I wonder why the owl is so charming and I look up.

“A painting has frozen meaning,”

Juliette says. She has entered the gallery, “A performance instead has liquid meaning. When it is over it is over, but the painting stays.”

I wink. “We speak of web content, of the Meta, not of reality,” I say. Juliette steps behind and looks at my screen. She starts to read, “A painter paints in Frozen Meta because when the paint is being presented, then it is expected to stay as it is.” I look to the owl. “Wrong,” is all I get. “Wrong?” I question this comment because I don't get it. Juliette steps in, “Art, that is your invention. Frozen Meta is a pizza

continue, “That looks like I hold a patent by now. I can licence Frozen Meta for painters to use” and I grin, “All over the Meta. Or else all paintings would belong to Zuck, like everything you create in SL belongs to Linden Lab.” Juliette's eyes widen and a sparkle inside emanates, like an owl I might say. “What? The eyes I created belong to SL?” The owl opens the TOS file, the Terms of Service, and there it is clearly stated that we are users who can be taken down at any time without any reason, without any warning. “I had this happen recently in Facebook. I could not access my group Relay For

“Let me read what you have written so far?”
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brand you patented and Hiro Deliverator offered slices to the audience of the Opensimulator Conference” and then after a pause, “Have you forgotten?” I say, “How can I forget, you shouted 'It's tasty!' and indeed you are right. Facebook has promoted my brand. A concierge approved it after a problem with the payment method was sorted out. He gave it a Go.” I look at Juliette and I

Ukraine. The group was still there but I could not invite any new members. So, I was stuck at 59 members.”

The owl taps with its claws, “Yeah, same thing with Instagram, Venus told me. She had it also there.” Juliette opens Facebook, “But you have now over 600 members in the group. What, you want more?” I say, “But they are mostly from India and Bangladesh. I

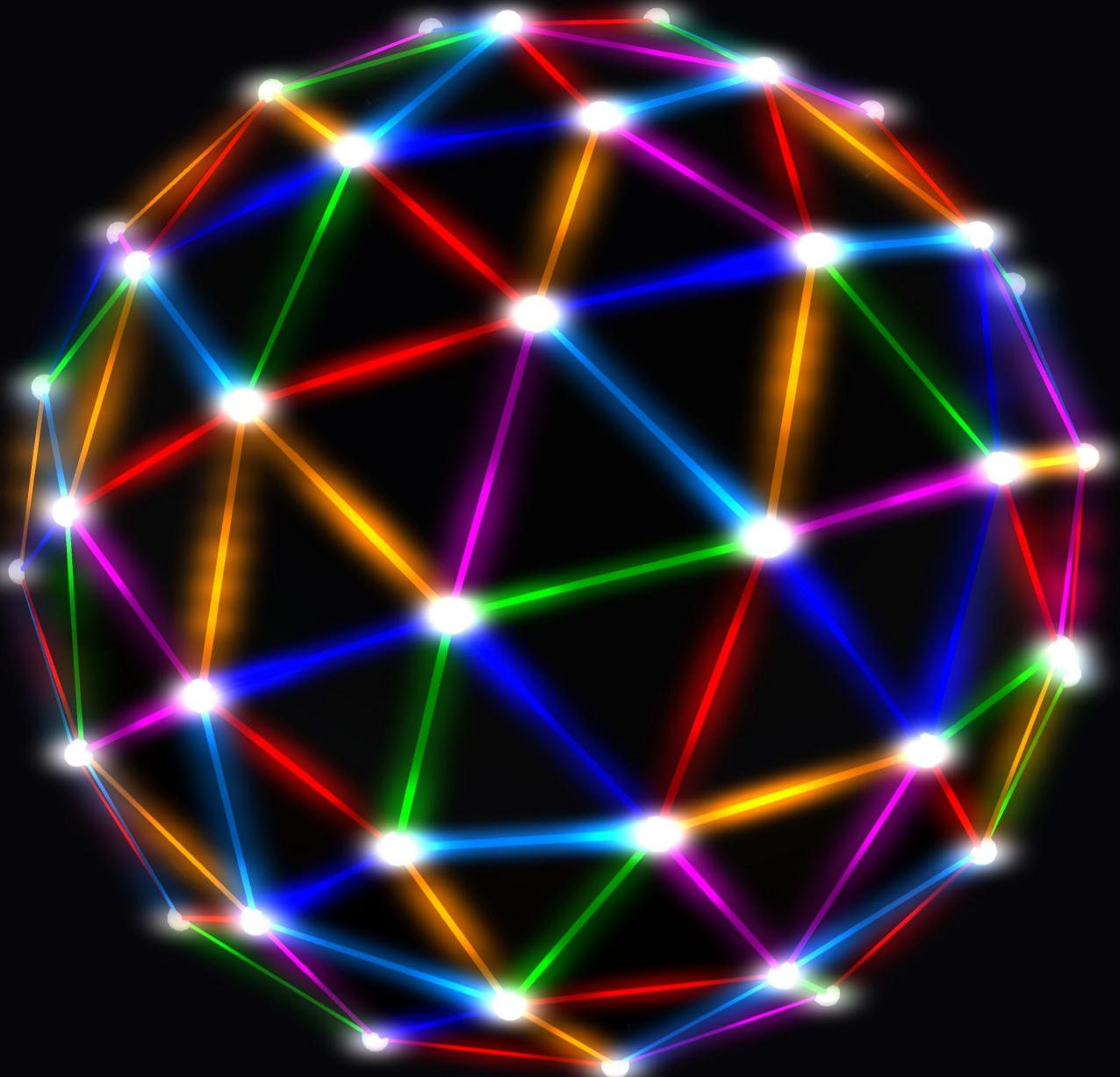
made an influencer from Bangladesh into an admin and within two days he popped it up. It costs me 50 bucks. For \$70 he would have lifted it up to over 1,000.” Juliette shakes head, “Facebook will block you, that's fake, all fake.” I grin, “I hope they do, but they will not. Have you forgotten the Congress hearing where Zuckerberg was interrogated?” Surely not many are remembering it, the ways where Zuck looked like being a school guy sitting in front of the Head Teacher being accused of stealing toilet paper. So I add, “All my followers in the group are organic members and even more real than the 59 friends I had before” and I add after a pause, “My friends are mostly virtual like you Juliette Surreal-D, the ones from Bangladesh are not.” Juliette needs a bit to respond, but then her face goes to a sad expression. She surely needed some time to find the right button in the Face HUD. “So Frozen Meta is also not real?” I made a face of triumph, “That's why I promoted Frozen Meta, not as group in Facebook but as a Dot Com domain. I could create a Metaversum under this name at any time.” And the owl adds, “And selling it to Zuck, like you will do with the Grammaverse.” Juliette now seems to be used to the HUD, she moves her index finger up, “Not as long as my paintings are inside.” I say, “I promise.” The owl taps and signs to get word. I am curious what the AI



will have to add. “Frozen Meta is a first meaningful paint.” I think about this for a little and then I nod. I shall go back to the article I am writing.

“A First Meaningful paint is the moment when “important” content is painted on the screen.” - This is the bible, this the Google Box says.

I know it because I recently made my qualification as certified SEO webmaster. I know that more lines are needed. The course took me over two



month, daily six hour lessons and then a final exam where only the best of the best pass. No wonder you challenge the Google Extreme Quantum AI. In this lab no longer are just normal people, no way. They are Neo-Humans. They can't code without using the neuronal networks which no human any longer understands. They only know that the framework that is provided works but no longer why and how. How shall I tell readers of rez Magazine to follow the path of Art works but there will be never a proof

of it, or else the path would be too simple, too easy to copy. "You need to simplify," the owl says, again reading my thoughts and then "You have believers." Believers sounds much better than followers. I take my pen and go on.

The Paint Museum

The Google AI does a word count and seeks for soft matches between user search requests and meaningful paints. A painting is a painting is a painting

and a painting is a rather complex thing, difficult to bring to readable lines. “You did well,” Juliette says, “This line taken from Picasso reads like the poetic justice of cause and effect.” The owl laughs. Of course, Neruval does not laugh, but could laugh, so let's go by the words. The owl laughs, “That's God.” Juliette laughs, as right now on the music stream in the gallery runs God is a DJ. What have I written about the Paint Museum?

The famous ones make it into the Cathedral of the First Meaningful Paint. There the painter leaves instructions about how future generations can play with the windlight. “View it on sunset,” or tells whatever the changes to the default might be. When you enter Paint, like in old times you entered MoMa, then you take a seat on one of the benches and you wait for the paintings to rez, then the sun rises and illuminates the dome. Then music tunes in, extends your senses. Slowly and decently. You may feel a soft breeze. This is my church. You let your eyes zoom, you crawl inside the painting, you find meaning in the paint, you shake hands with the brain of the painter. You fall into a dreamlike state. You feel Frozen Meta. A paint conserves, a paint tells of the past. A meaningful paint has value. What if you seek more than value, when you seek high value, one that

expands your brain? When you seek belief? When you seek God? We know in the Meta that God is a VJ, a visual jockey. When all this happens, when the painter has followers, has likes, has an impact on social media, then the paint has to be a First Meaningful Paint.

“I told you, this reads like a poem of poetic justice of cause and effect,” Juliette says and the owl steps in, “Respect, love, compassion. This is my church. This is where I heal my hurts.”

I understand. I shall end writing for tonight and deal with meaning another day. The catalogue of Amerika Art is done. To add a first meaningful paint will be on Juliette, so her interviews will reference my work. What I think about Amerika Art is my view and the view of the artists shall be captured by her.

Time to rest. Time to travel.

But wait, before I go. I hear a ping. It is an incoming request. A note named “To Art Blue - revised” comes with the ping. It is by Gem Preiz. The text reads like a contentful paint. He wants to be in the book in the way I suggested. Happily, I will add an additional page to the catalogue of Amerika Art.

Never heard of the term contentful paint? Let me Google this for you:

“First Contentful Paint is the amount of time it takes for a user to see the first content on a website, whether it's images, text, logos, background graphics, or non-white <canvas> elements.”

It seems technology is no longer defined by terms of tech and math; the descriptions are lent from the art world. You don't publish any longer on screen, you publish on canvas. So let it be that Amerika Art is the first nonwhite <canvas> of the Afterlife.

Homo Uniformis

Gem Preiz created 16 chambers that lead visitors to the Afterlife. He did not plan to contribute more to Amerika Art. “I am fine to build the chambers and my friend Delain will create the particles inside,” he said. He told me that he has problems with the concept, that an Afterlife is not made for him.

Time was moving forward and many of the chambers have been claimed, leaving some enthusiastic messages that surely also Gem got. I said to Gem, “If you want to re-think your decision then time has come to create your Afterlife.” He was undecided. I offered him to leave the strict boundaries of the construct behind and said, “Maybe a philosophical destination with your deep thinker inside?” The deep thinker he once

created for a fractal manufactory left a strong impression on me.

Gem Preiz created a wireframe sphere, illuminated the edges and connected them with sticks of equal length. You don't know where is up or down, left or right, north, east, south or west. He called his installation *Homo Uniformis*. When you Google the term, you will find a world where all shapes and forms have to stay in the norm not to become Enemies of the System [a novel by Brian Wilson].

Gem Preiz sent me a line I want to share: “I am afraid that within globalisation, internet and social networks are devices that speed up a process which is written in Nature: functioning as a whole entity, mankind seeks the greatest possible efficiency and productivity, and as a result tends to aggregate individuals, eliminate or erase discrepancies and foster uniformity.”

I put a small book inside his dome where in contrast to his message each contributor to Amerika Art is shown differently and to complete the non-uniformity the art show carries, I booked for an in-situ meeting on May 21 a table in the Oscar Niemeyer Sphere.

• r — e — z •

RoseDrop Rust Pre-knot

They stood out of sight
as a stranger's hand is touched
in first exploration of anatomy
bird flutter movement noted.

Whispered word in beast tongue.

"Is your trust intact,
for you must not falter,
for in the hall yonder
there is only now
and forever after."

The nod was not seen
but felt like claw on wire
or raindrop on hot pavement
disappearing into vapor.

Blindfolds dark under bright lights
hundreds of flashbulbs klieg light
The demonstration is of rope and art
Expectant object of a Master's knots.

CAT BOCCACCIO

Second Life Photography



Ignorance

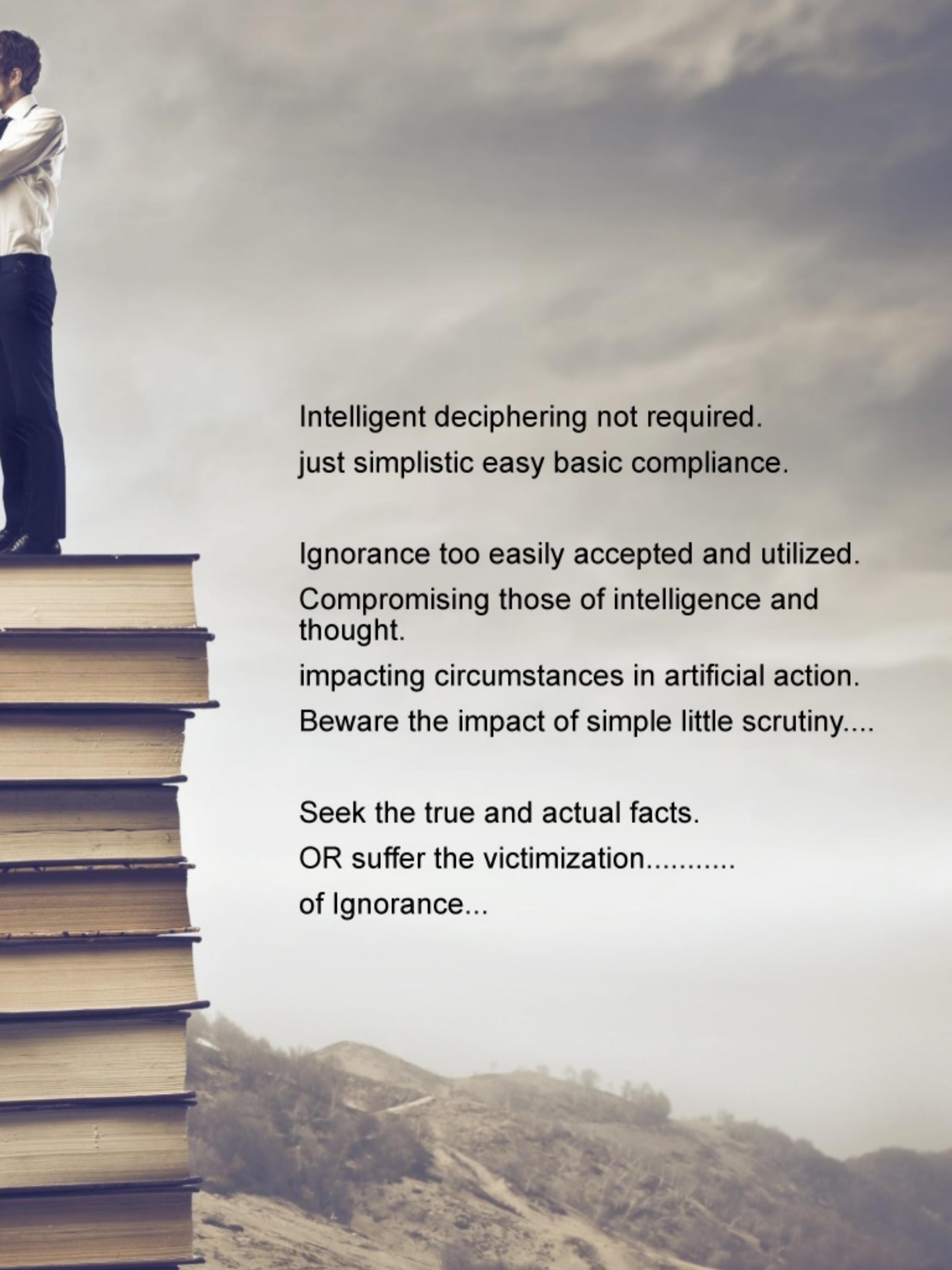
By Dearstluv Writer

Ignorance brings to itself victims
Delusional in superficial whims
They respond on simple impulse
Unaware of consequences ahead.

Ignorance using simple evidences
guides to unfocused convictions.
Often in misinterpretation of valid facts.
leading, readily, to negative reception...

Ignorance has a simple path to follow
requiring little balance of knowledge





Intelligent deciphering not required.
just simplistic easy basic compliance.

Ignorance too easily accepted and utilized.
Compromising those of intelligence and
thought.
impacting circumstances in artificial action.
Beware the impact of simple little scrutiny....

Seek the true and actual facts.
OR suffer the victimization.....
of Ignorance...



At

A Puppet's Tail: Part Seven “Drink Me!”

Annie Mesmeriser

So now I'm looking for a job again, patiently waiting for Paul Osborne.... magician, actor, magic-box designer, and master puppeteer.... to sell another show so we could all get back to work. Nicki seemed to have established his foothold in the company with his current job as body-puppet magician in a downtown Ft. Worth hotel lounge and part-time spy. Flipping thru the want-ads, I ran across a job at Fridays restaurant in north Dallas on Greenville Ave, the first in Dallas and a place in those days known as a "Meet Market." The hours matched mine, 10am to 2am, my natural hours for my entire life which came in handy when I would later manage a blues guitar player, putting me in a Steak & Egg at 4am on many a night after a gig. I was hired and started my career waiting tables at a place that required you to wear a soccer jersey and a "funny hat", which for me was easy. Before I left Marco Polo Park, a friend who used to do an historical dialogue on Marco Polo in one of the shows had given me his authentic Venetian straw hat as a gift at the end of the season and now it would serve me well.

My time at Fridays was a short but wild ride. The manager wore a '69 Super Bowl ring he got for being the left guard for Joe Namath. His NFL experience came in handy one night when a safety for the then Houston Oilers came in late one night, proceeded to down nine beers in short order while ordering no food, then wanted to argue about his bill, claiming in slurred speech he hadn't had that much to drink. The third-manager was on that night, a slight young man about 5'8" and he wasn't impressing the stout and full-of-stout footballer who immediately decked him with a single punch, wiping out a rather expensive Tiffany lamp in the same swing. All the waiters rushed to the rescue, but were more prone to pelt



him with leftover shrimp than actually engage in combat. Someone called the manager and the former Super Bowler arrived about ten minutes later.

Paul was a rather large stout man himself and no doubt could have wrestled this mere defensive safety to the floor, but instead he was quite friendly and invited him up to the bar for more drinks, only this time he was being served straight alcohol while Paul was matching his drinks with cokes. Before long, the poor guy was so intoxicated, he fell off the barstool and landed with a thud on the barroom floor. Paul then calmly rolled him over face down, pulled out his wallet, and started counting up the bar tab, plus tip, plus the price of that Tiffany lamp, and he was only counting hundred dollar bills. Afterwards, a couple of waiters lifted him to a bench outside the front door. Paul called a taxi and when it arrived, handed another hundred dollar bill to the taxi driver and told him to take him wherever he wanted to go. Before it was all over, Paul was grinning ear to ear, quite pleased at his effortless and efficient work. After close, Paul got us all up to the bar to celebrate the day with a goodnight beer and schnapps...

Working at Fridays consumed my time, paid the bills, and added a few more memories to my notebook. One such storied Friday evening was to be

the last shift for Daniel as he had graduated from college and was ready to move on. He was young, small in stature, bearded and I'd like to say he was crazier than most at Fridays except he only managed to be as crazy as most of the staff, like Kaveh, who thought it funny to light another waiter's beard on fire, or in order to be fully accepted as



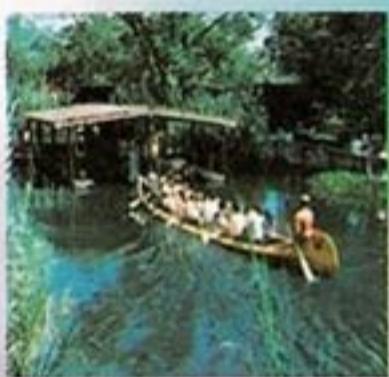
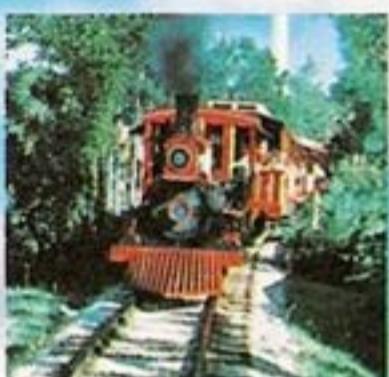
a great waiter, you had to work at least one full shift while stoned to the max. Over the course of this particular evening, Daniel managed to hide drinks all over the restaurant that he was consuming at every stop and we all were taking note of his current state of drunkenness. He finally disappeared altogether and our benevolent manager asked me to cover his tables while the search for him was on.

We did not have to wait long before

Daniel appeared, screaming out of the kitchen area on roller skates, totally naked save for his soccer shirt, now stuffed with two balloons up front, his funny hat, and a broad smile as he sped through the crowded restaurant, mooning customers along the way. He even managed to hop over the front door seal, but lost balance soon afterwards and wound up landing head first into the water fountain out front, his bare legs now dangling in mid-air, a picture I will never be able to wipe

from my memory, no matter how hard I try.

Halloween arrived and of course Paul wanted to throw a party at the puppet house, the old Victorian place on Fairmount in the Oak Lawn area of Dallas that still served as the home office of Paul Osborne & Assoc. The circus-colored house, from floor-to-ceiling, was decorated with balloons and streamers and skeletons and witches hanging on walls so vibrant in color already that they simply absorbed

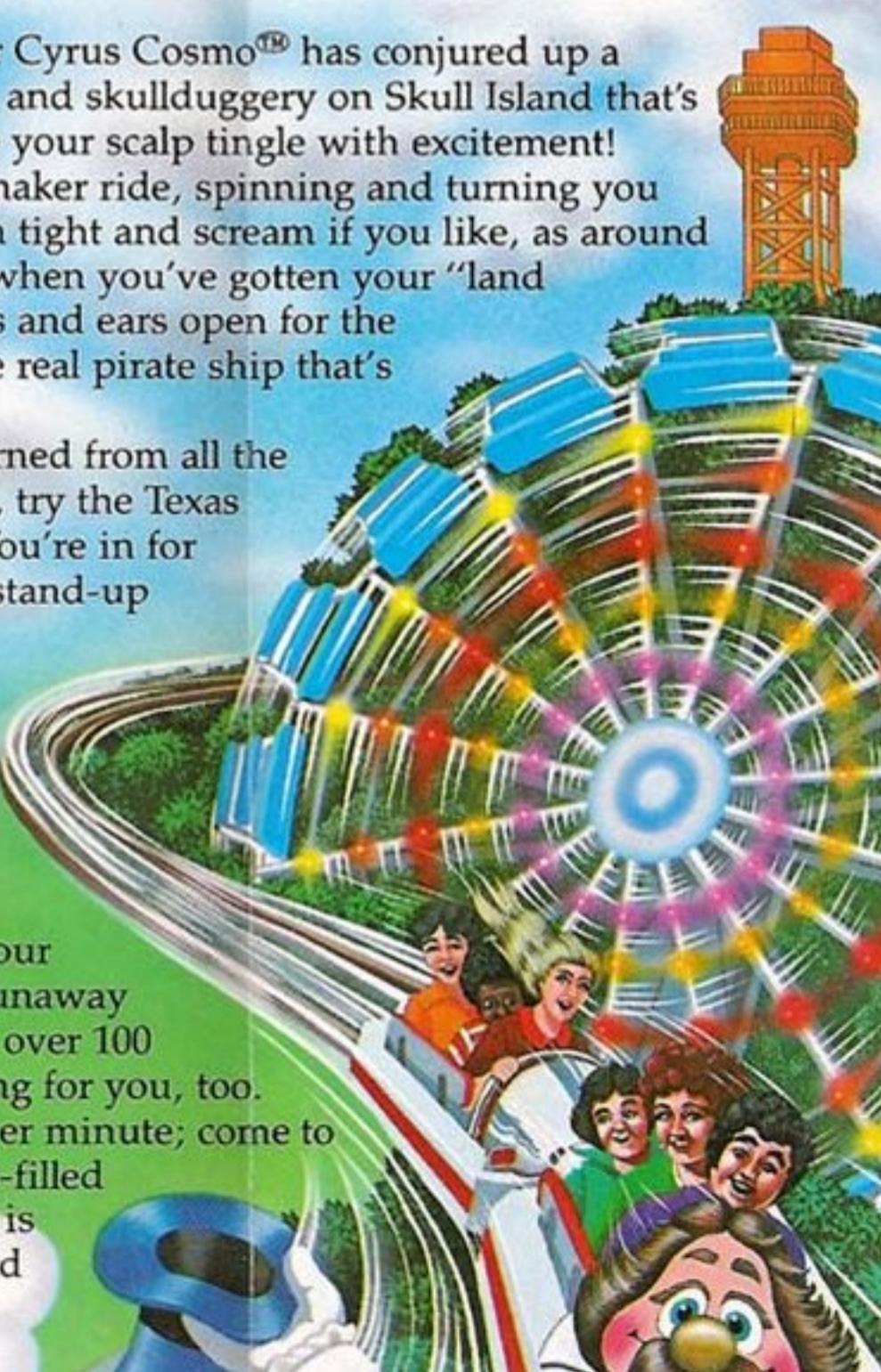


This year, Professor Cyrus Cosmo™ has conjured up a special batch of fun and skullduggery on Skull Island that's guaranteed to make your scalp tingle with excitement!

It's the thrilling new Spinnaker ride, spinning and turning you upside down—so, hold on tight and scream if you like, as around and around you go. And when you've gotten your "land legs" back, keep your eyes and ears open for the puppet pirate show on the real pirate ship that's docked on the Island.

Once you've safely returned from all the adventures of Skull Island, try the Texas Chute Out (if you dare). You're in for a whole new twist in our stand-up baskets that whirl and twirl you 17 stories to the ground. And there'll be singing and dancing and merriment at the Southern Palace and Good Time Theater with their all-new shows. All your favorites: the Log Ride, Runaway Mine Train, Big Bend and over 100 other attractions are waiting for you, too.

So don't put it off another minute; come to Six Flags today for the fun-filled time of your life. Six Flags is what you wish the world could be!



the added decorations. Gary had been our event manager in Florida but was also from Dallas so when he called, I invited him to come to the party. Gary was sharp, adapted well, always fun to work with and interested in working for Paul after overseeing the puppet show at Marco Polo World, so he seemed like the perfect fit. When he came into the house, Paul's demeanor immediately changed. It was not pretty to watch, Gary groveling for a job while Paul took on that same attitude that he had in talking about Alan, the misfortunate former manager of Paul's puppet show in Florida.

Later, Paul came over with a wicked grin and explained that Gary was really a spy from another magic outfit sent to steal his designs and he was giddy he had successfully spun him in circles and foiled his attempt. I was dumbfounded, I knew Gary all too well and it simply wasn't true, but Paul believed it with all his heart and his paranoia ran deep. I never fully realized before that moment how fierce the competition was in the magic business. There are secrets galore and all attempts to break that secrecy was met with disdain. But to watch it up close, it seemed as if children were arguing over toys. The party was rather fun though and I managed to stay sober this time, along with my sobering thoughts.



Thanksgiving came and went, giving way to Christmas. Paul invited all of us to his Oak Lawn apartment for a company Christmas party. Paul's wife Monica was there and their young son Lantz, named after Walter Lantz of Woody Woodpecker fame, sort of, but that was the story anyway. Monica was a model who I remembered from the State Fair of Texas as she stood next to the latest Chevy and pointed with Vanna White precision. Paul bought Lantz a bicycle for a present that year and typical of his twisted sense of humor, he had meticulously wrapped every square inch of that bike with small strips of wrapping paper and tape, tightly wound around every tube and part. The effect was that you could clearly see it was a bike, only instead of a paint job, it had wrapping paper. It must have taken poor Lantz the rest of the week just to remove all the paper. Once again, I had to wonder how far removed from reality Paul really was. I mean, that was just plain cruel. But I was reminded of some of his other mind-sets like, you build a beautiful



body-puppet, then you "fill it with hamburger." As one who had been meat in the Florida heat in my Eat-No-Lean body puppet, I can tell you there is a lot that goes into emoting in a giant head and body. He only saw his creation and totally discounted that it took a special person to bring life to a mere puppet.

Christmas came and went and finally some projects arrived for us to get back to work on. One in particular was an entire theme that was sold to Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington, called Cyrus Cosmo. There was a theater being built to stage an act similar to the one Nicki was doing at the hotel lounge including a body puppet, pretty assistant, and magic box. But the contract also committed us to building The Electric Light Brigade Parade, which would be performed once every day after dark. I had a little electrical experience so I was chosen to do the electronics to some rather funny-looking carts being made for the parade. In typical Paul fashion, he had drawn up his cart

designs in cartoons showing what he envisioned them to do and wholly untethered in reality or metrics or available materials.

The recently-hired carpenter with the long curly red hair, looking a bit like Bozo himself, came over to me, showing me his cartoons with a puzzled look on his face and said, "These don't even have dimensions on these drawings! How big are they supposed to be?", to which I laughed and said, "Your guess is as good as Paul's!" But he was also rather sharp, nodded and said, "Oh, I guess I'll get to be an engineer, too!"..... "Yup!" Meanwhile, I was struggling to design something real myself. One cartoon was a cart with a round glass box on top that glowed in different colors with a note printed off to the side that said, "Moves with Music." A similar box for a second cart was filled with various shaped objects mysteriously levitating in air. I could tell these designs would require some serious drug usage on my part but I was prepared to sacrifice for the cause.

Back home again, back to work on puppets, done with Fridays, and scratching my head wondering what magic I would have to create to remain a puppeteer.....

• r — e — z •

TERPSICORPS ARTWERKS



No Reason To Put In

Ervare





We do things, right? But why do we do things? Because there is a reason. We log in to the Metaverse for a reason. This is the state of higher existence. This is proof that we exist. But isn't state of proof a criminal term? It is. To be precise, state of proof is a term in criminal law.

Someone says, "I did not do it." Let's call this person Nitup. Nitup is a honorable man, elected by the masses, cherished by his men, feared by his enemies. His legacy is timeless and immaculate.

"Friends, Romans,"

There is one standing up, let's call him Suturb, saying, "He did it" and gives state of proof. Nitup says, "That's fake."

The masses shouting, "That's fake. Fake. Fake." The soldiers following. The enemies bowing. Nitup logs out.

There are dead bodies all over. "You did this," a voice from the off echoes. Nitup logs in, "I have now proof. It's all fake. I saw it with my own eyes. No one was killed. They just lost interest in logging in." Suturb says, "There is no reason for them to log in."

Nitup commands: "Suturb has to be put in, before he becomes an Enemy of the System." The operator asks, "That

to put in the Metaverse?"

That's a quite political question, right? I will ask everyone.

A presidential tweet hits me: "Despite the constant negative press covfefe." Covfefe Art was born and it runs strong, we know it. In such times we have also let other world leaders give word:

Putin said that the term "metaverse," coined 30 years ago, suggests that in this space, people are escaping the flaws of reality. – THAT'S MY SOURCE, THAT'S MY PUT IN.

'No one can censor us in the metaverse, including Putin' – THAT'S MY SOURCE, THAT'S MY PUT IN.

Putin warned: In the metaverse, one should not run away from the real world. – THAT'S MY SOURCE, THAT'S MY PUT IN.

During the international conference Artificial Intelligence Journey 2021, Vladimir Putin said that the protection of Russians and their avatars in the metaverse should be the responsibility of the state.

– THAT'S MY SOURCE, THAT'S MY PUT IN.

• r — e — z •



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The SL Arts and Life Magazine



cat Boccaccio



Rosa

cio

As Angel began to breathe on her own, Rosa developed a cough. It was a dry, rasping, deep-lung cough, that startled Radical out of his deep sleep on the cot beside Angel's bed.

It was only day two of the induced coma, and Rosa was pleased that Angel's temperature had come down a little, and that her breathing was less laboured. But I was concerned for Rosa.

She shrugged off my concerns, which was very like Rosa. She was the member of the crew least interested in intimacy, and would help populate the planet out of duty, not lust. She dismissed my worry not out of courage, but from disdain for my weakness and lack of focus. Of course she cared about her health; she cared nothing, however, about my frivolous opinions.

Radical's routine had been disrupted and he was sleeping more than he ever did before we were quarantined. This alarmed me too. Yes, we three were stuck in a small space with a sick child, but I seemed to be the only one completely unscathed. I slept well, considering. I had a good appetite. I walked the treadmill. I kept my spirits up. I tended to Angel, keeping her clean and fresh. I distracted Radical, who should have been much more



restless than he was. Perhaps boredom caused his sleep cycle change?

I just wanted Angel to get well, and for us all to get out and back with the rest of the crew, back to our regular activities and duties, get the children back in school and back to their active daily life.



“How is she?” Radical asked me, climbing, uncharacteristically, into my lap as I sat by Angel’s bed. Rosa was preparing to bring the child out of the coma. Angel’s parents observed from the monitor, tense and agitated.

Radical asked me because Rosa would have ignored his question. “She is

doing well, Raddy,” I said, trying to hug him. His sharp elbows and ribbed spine impeded my attempts. “Look! She is breathing just fine on her own.”

And Rosa crumpled to the floor.

Radical tumbled unceremoniously to the floor as I stood and rushed to Rosa’s side. She wasn’t breathing. I threw protocol to the wind then, for which I could have been severely reprimanded. Rightly so.

I broke quarantine and let the others into the hospital unit. Ed was second medical officer. Rosa needed him.

Christopher and Sara gave Ed a wide berth and went directly to the other side of the bed, leaning over Angel. Christopher then threw protocol to the stars, and picked their daughter up, cradling her in his arms.

Protocol didn’t matter any more.

Angel opened her eyes.

Rosa died.

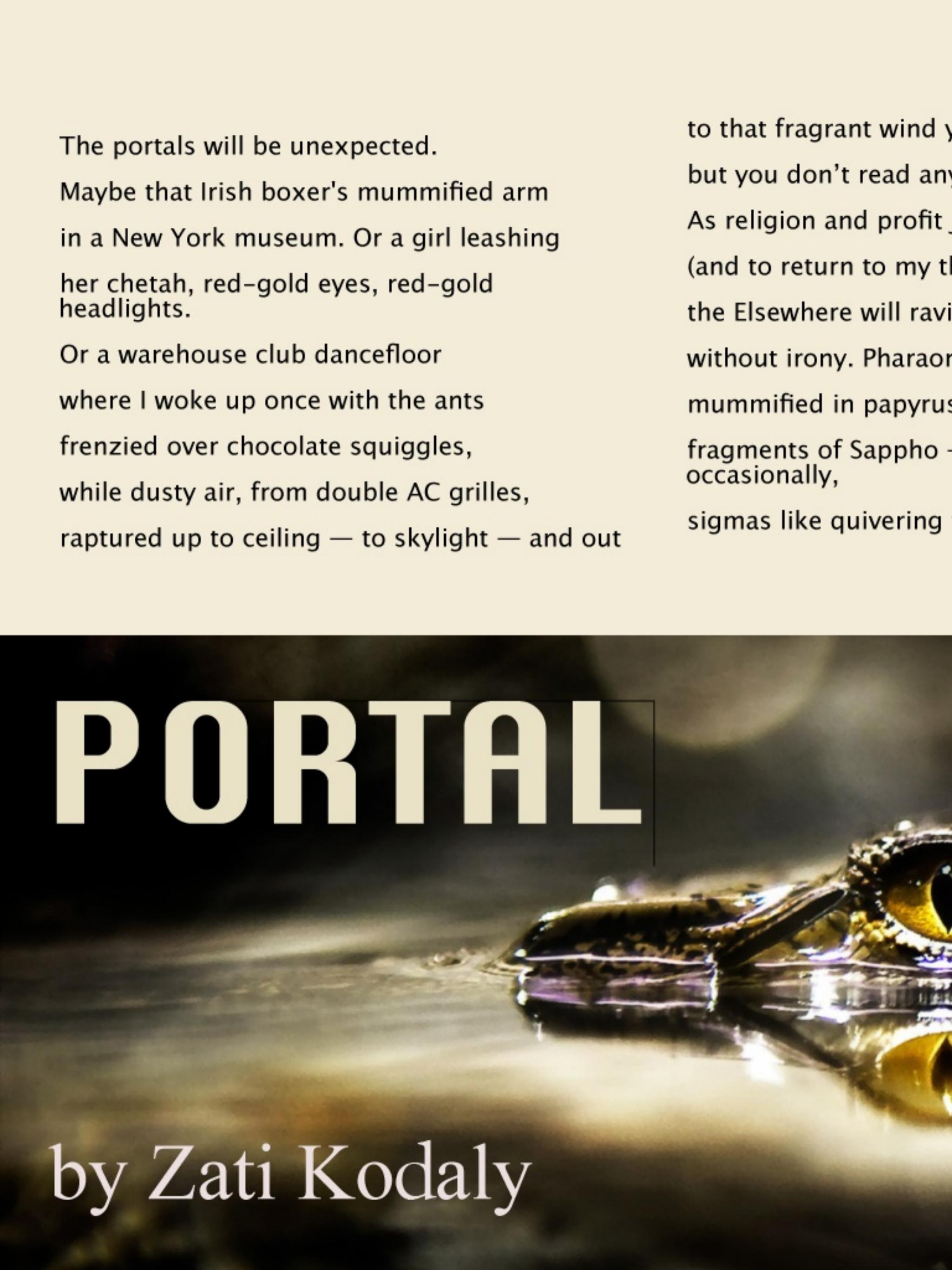
I went to get a blanket for Rosa, and saw my son, Radical. He was in the shadows behind Angel’s bed, watching everything, alone and unmoving.

• r — e — z •

The portals will be unexpected.
Maybe that Irish boxer's mummified arm
in a New York museum. Or a girl leashing
her chetah, red-gold eyes, red-gold
headlights.
Or a warehouse club dancefloor
where I woke up once with the ants
frenzied over chocolate squiggles,
while dusty air, from double AC grilles,
raptured up to ceiling — to skylight — and out

to that fragrant wind you
but you don't read any
As religion and profit
(and to return to my thoughts
the Elsewhere will ravish
without irony. Pharaoh
mummified in papyrus
fragments of Sappho —
occasionally,
sigmas like quivering

PORTAL



by Zati Kodaly

you read about in Dante
ymore.

jump together,

heme),

sh you now

nic crocodiles

s will still hold

— they will crawl out

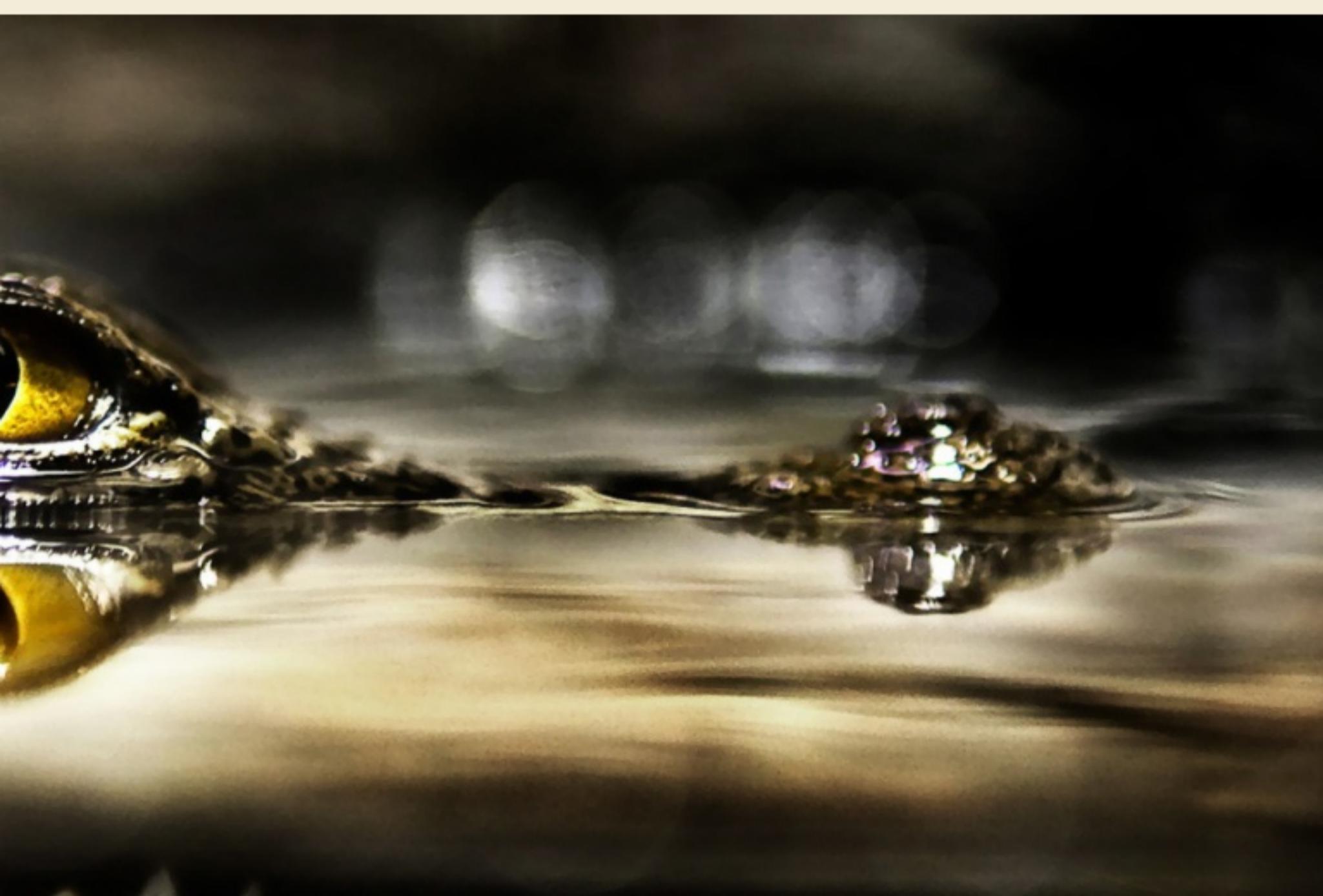
tails, having slept alone

so long in reptilian abyss.

Even Petrarch will come back into view,
his rhymes scattered like limbs of Osiris
or is it Orpheus whose torn-off head (still
singing)

grazes this sinking headland.

I want to go sit — in a café —
and chop off — my little finger.



**Publisher
Jami Mills**

**Senior Editor
Friday Blaisdale**

**Art Director
Jami Mills**

Writers

Cat Boccaccio

Art Blue

Ervare

Zati Kodaly

Dearstuv Writer

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Friday Blaisdale
Jami Mills

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